

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: JEREMY THORPE'S VISIT TO BRUSSELS

1. THE LEADER OF THE BRITISH LIBERAL PARTY, JEREMY THORPE, WAS IN BRUSSELS ON MARCH 20 FOR TALKS AT THE EC COMMISSION. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THORPE SAID THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS TO HOLD SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR COMMISSIN OFFICIALS AND TO ENLIST SUPPORT FOR HIS PARTY'S REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN. THORPE SAID EC COMMISSIONERS SOAMES AND THOMSON HAVE EACH AGREED TO ADD SEVERAL ENGAGEMENTS (UNDER THE LIBERAL BANNER) TO THEIR CURRENT SPEAKING SCHEDULES. THORPE SAID HE HAS ALSO OBTAINED COMMISSINER GUIDO BRUNNER'S AGREEMENT TO SPEAK IN LONDON AND YORK MAY 1/2.

2. THORPE STRESSED THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR EUROPEAN LIBERALS, AS WELL AS FOR BRITAIN, OF THE REFERENDUM'S OUTCOME, SAYING THAT BY 1975 THERE WILL BE A EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF LIBERAL POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH WILL WORK ON A COMMON POLITICAL PLATFORM IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE 1978 GENERAL ELECTION FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.

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3. DURING A QUESTION PERIOD, THORPE STRESSED THE

"DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES" OF A NEGATIONVE OUTCOME OF THE REFERENDUM. HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT EVEN A NEGATIVE VOTE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN A HOUSE MAFORITY IN FAVOR OF LEAVING THE COMMUNITY. HE SAID THAT ALL LIBERAL M.P.'S WOULD BACK COMMUNITY MEMBER-SHIP. FINALLY, THORPE CAME OUT SRTONGLY IN FAVOR OF PERMITTING BRITISH SUBJECTS OVERSEAS TO VOTE IN THE FORTHCOMING REFERENDUM. GREENWALD

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